



## Stuckey, Chianelli, Work with Avista, Idaho F&G, and Idaho TU to Conserve Bull Trout

Cooperation is the key to successful bull trout conservation in the lower Clark Fork Drainage, according to FWP's Jay Stuckey and Tom Chianelli. Stuckey, the FWP fisheries and education technician in Thompson Falls, works with counterparts in Avista Corporation (operators of Noxon and Cabinet Gorge dams), Idaho Fish and Game and Idaho Trout Unlimited. Together, the group delivers information and education programs about bull trout conservation to school groups, anglers, and visitors at fairs and other events. Chianelli, the FWP game ward stationed in Thompson Falls, works closely with Idaho Fish and Game Wardens on patrols and information-sharing designed to protect bull trout.



**NOXON RAPIDS DAM**

caused to bull trout as a result of Noxon and Cabinet Gorge dams. Avista Corporation funds the project with the goal of conserving bull trout by reducing poaching, accidental bull trout take by anglers, and fisheries habitat loss. According to Avista's Joe DosSantos, who manages the project,



### WORKING TOGETHER FOR BULL TROUT CONSERVATION

*FWP's Tom Chianelli and Jay Stuckey are working in a cooperative project to conserve bull trout in the Lower Clark Fork Basin.*

The bull trout education and protection project is part of a larger project organized under the Lower Clark Fork Settlement Agreement. The agreement relates to mitigating damage caused to bull trout as a result of Noxon and Cabinet Gorge dams. Avista Corporation funds the project with the goal of conserving bull trout by reducing poaching, accidental bull trout take by anglers, and fisheries habitat loss. According to Avista's Joe DosSantos, who manages the project, solid progress has been made in educating anglers and others about the importance of bull trout conservation.

One of Jay Stuckey's most important responsibilities under the project is conducting interviews with anglers throughout the drainage. He interviews anglers about their fishing experience, and gives them a test in identifying bull trout and

*continued on page two*

## Managing the Cutbow Fishery in Ashley Lake

By Mark Deleray, FWP Fisheries Biologist

Ashley Lake, a large lake in Northwestern Montana, is popular for its clean waters and kokanee salmon fishing. Ashley Lake also has three of Montana's large fish records, including yellow perch, pygmy whitefish and the hybrid cutthroat/rainbow trout. In fact, the 30-pound "cutbow" trout is not only a State record, but also a world record. Pat Kelly of Kalispell caught the giant trout in 1982.

The Ashley Lake spawning streams are small and suffer from dewatering and high sediment levels, especially during extended drought periods. This limits the number of wild trout that are produced. In an effort to increase fish numbers, there is an ongoing cooperative effort to raise and stock these cutbows. Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks, the U. S. Fish and

*continued on page two*

## IN THIS ISSUE

- CONSERVING BULL TROUT ON THE CLARK FORK DRAINAGE
- MANAGING ASHLEY LAKE'S FISH POPULATIONS
- HIGHLIGHTS FROM LAKE HONORING DAY
- HUNTERS EDUCATION ASSISTANT INSTRUCTORS NEEDED



**FREE COPY**  
**PLEASE HELP YOURSELF**

## Cutbow Fishery

*continued from front page*

Wildlife Service and private landowners on the lake are working together to improve the fishery. "It is great to see the government agencies and private landowners working together on this project" said Jim Vashro, fisheries manager for Region 1 in North-western Montana. "This project will improve the fishing without compromising the genetic make-up that produced the world record size fish" said Vashro.

In the spring, Stewart Kienow and Brian Strohschein, hatchery personnel from Montana Fish Wildlife and Parks, set traps in Ashley Lake to capture large cutbows on their way to spawning streams. In 2004, they took roughly 30,000 eggs from these fish and delivered them to a small private hatchery at Ashley Lake. Gar Holmes, a hatchery worker for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, maintains the hatchery on his property. The Fish and Wildlife Service provides his time and food for the fish he raises. Holmes raises the fish through the early summer months. Kienow and Strohschein then transfer these young fish from the hatchery to the stream inlet where the eggs were collected. Private landowners come from around the lake help release the 2-inch fish into the lake.

Very important to this process is the help provided by the landowner at the stream inlet. "Frank Gamma is the main reason this works well," said Kienow. "Mr. Gamma has been watching over the spawning fish for years, helping with egg collections, and protecting the traps from vandalism."

"No one cares more for these cutbows and the fishery than Frank, without his help and cooperation this would not be possible," added Strohschein.

This program began in 2002 and will continue for years to come. The small fish are marked with a dye while in the hatchery. Montana Fish Wildlife & Parks fisheries personnel will be assessing the success of this effort by catching and checking large cutbows in the future to determine if they were raised in hatchery. FWP annually monitors the fish population in Ashley Lake and with time will determine what proportion of the cutbow population originates from this stocking effort. The project started by stocking 20,000 to 30,000 fry per year, in the future this number may be increased or decreased dependent on the survival of the fish. Just this year, the first stocked fish were captured in the FWP surveys.



## Clark Fork Bull Trout

*continued from front page*

other trout. Through these direct contacts, anglers improve their ability to identify trout and learn about bull trout conservation. In turn, FWP learns more about anglers' views and preferences. Stuckey, who served as public school teacher for many years, also spends a lot of time in the schools, working with students on fisheries education and bull trout conservation. In these activities, he works with Idaho Trout Unlimited's Maria Corsini who conducts a similar program in the Idaho portion of the drainage.



### ANGLER INTERVIEWS

*Jay Stuckey interviews angler Roger Tout on Noxon Reservoir. Tout is taking the quiz on trout identification. These contacts are designed to improve anglers' abilities to identify trout.*

Warden Tom Chianelli spends a lot of his time on the project patrolling areas where bull trout spawn. In the past, these have been problem areas for bull trout poaching.



### CHECKING FOR CREDENTIALS & QUESTIONS

*Warden Tom Chianelli checks the fishing license of an angler on the reservoir. Chianelli uses these contacts to remind anglers of the regulations, pass on information about bull trout, and to listen to public attitudes about the fishery.*

Clark Fork drainage. He considers these personal contacts a vital part of the program.

In an era where some mitigation projects bog down with agency rivalries, this bull trout protection and education project is a good example of how natural resources benefit when people work together. For more information on the project, contact FWP in Thompson Falls at 827-9205.





# Flathead Lake Honoring Day Highlights State/Tribes Cooperation

The 2004 Flathead Lake Honoring Day, held September 21, featured education stations ranging from fish management to water quality to boating safety. This year's event hosted more than 100 high school students from Flathead, Polson, Ronan, and Two-Eagle River High Schools.

The day opened at Sacagewea Park with introductions by state, tribal, and other government officials, and a talk and dedication by Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribe' elder Tony Incashola. Following Tony's talk, the Bigcrane drumming group performed for the students. These ceremonies were performed by the Tribes to show their respect and stewardship for Flathead Lake, and to include the students in their recognition of the lake's importance to our quality of life.

Following these opening ceremonies, the students divided into groups and went through four educational stations at Sacagewea Park, and the University of Montana Biological Station at Yellow Bay. Students learned about lake conservation, biology and management of native and nonnative fish, tribal views on water quality, and catching and cleaning nonnative fish. At the University of Montana Biological Station, students learned about the biological web of life in the lake and factors affecting it.

The Honoring Day is sponsored by FWP and CSKT under the guidance of the Flathead Lake and River Fisheries Co-management Plan, which guides the management of the lake through 2010. The Flathead Lakers and the University of Montana Biological Station are also cooperators. The purpose of the event is to raise awareness of water quality and fisheries issues in the communities around the lake. The overall goal of the Co-management Plan is to conserve native fish, specifically bull trout and westslope cutthroat trout; encourage harvest of non-native fish, such as lake trout and lake whitefish; and to maintain Flathead Lake's high water quality.



*FWP Fisheries Biologist Mark Deleray worked with Cindy Bras of the CSKT to present fish identification and fish management information on Flathead Lake.*



## **THE BIGCRANE DRUMMERS**

*presented a dedication at the Flathead Lake Honoring Day.*



## **SAFE BOATING**

*FWP Game Warden Rick Schoening talked to the students about boating safely in Flathead Lake.*



## **FILLETING SMALL LAKE TROUT**


*Local fishing expert Andrew Zimmer talks to students about the fishery in Flathead Lake. Here he demonstrates how to fillet a small lake trout. Fisheries managers for FWP and the CSKT are hoping that anglers will harvest large numbers of these small lake trout, making more space for native bull trout and westslope cutthroat trout.*





*The Kalispell Area Hunter Education Program has an active Assistant Instructor Group. A number of the instructors are pictured here at the October, 2004 field course. Back row, left to right: Anthony Hauser, Ryan Reid, Jarek Bernt, Tim Heaps. Front row, left to right: Holly Dulin, Austin Bowen, Charlie Stafford, Sydney Breland.*

## Young Hunter Education Instructors Needed

Hunter Education Instructors of all ages are needed in northwest Montana's program, but young instructors are especially needed. These "Assistant Instructors" play a vital role in Hunter Education, both in the classroom and on the field day. Young instructors serve as role models for students, and make students feel more comfortable in the program. As a payoff, assistant instructors gain valuable experience in teaching and community service. Hunter Education Graduates who are 12-17 and who wish to get involved can pick up an application at the Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks headquarters on North Meridian Road in Kalispell. 

**INSIDE TRACKS** is published by Region One  
**FOR A FREE SUBSCRIPTION  
WRITE OR CALL:**

**INSIDE TRACKS**  
490 N. MERIDIAN ROAD  
KALISPELL, MT 59901-3854  
406-752-5501



**Montana Fish,  
Wildlife & Parks**

Jim Williams, Wildlife Manager  
Jim Vashro, Fisheries Manager  
Marty Watkins, Parks Manager  
Ed Kelly, Warden Captain  
Martha Abbrescia, Office Manager  
Brian Marotz, Fisheries Mitigation Coordinator  
Alan Wood, Wildlife Mitigation Coordinator  
John Fraley, Information Officer, Newsletter Editor  
FWP Director, Jeff Hagener

**INSIDE**   
 **TRACKS**

490 N. MERIDIAN ROAD  
KALISPELL, MT 59901-3854

PRSTD STD  
US Postage  
PAID  
PERMIT NO. 93  
KALISPELL, MT  
59901-3854

*Or  
current  
resident*